

August 12, 1959

Dr. G. A. Derbyshire
Space Science Board
National Academy of Sciences
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Derbyshire:

Thank you for the reports received in good order.

Dr. Hartline's interim statement seems to me excellent. Possibly, a more detailed presentation on extraterrestrial life might be desirable; whether the Westex report can be ready for your deadline, and if so, whether it should be incorporated in Science in Space or treated separately are both problematical.

The only comment I have is that the last page may overrate the difficulty of decontamination: a revision closer to the tone of SSB-100 would be more consistent. By the same argument I would say that decontamination is (now) not so much the most urgent problem as that it is the first one and a necessary basis for subsequent exploration. More emphasis should be placed now on experimental construction taking advantage of clean instruments.

This is not important but I have a personal allergy to the term "biosciences" which lumps a lot of incommensurables.

I have to give some more thought to whether Man-in-Space is a program of sufficient value in any sphere to warrant our urging the "collaboration of a larger scientific community."

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

P.S. 25 copies of "Research in Space" for local propaganda?